

***PRINT CULTURE
AND
THE MODERN WORLD***

- We cannot imagine a world without print. We find evidence of print in books, journals, news papers, etc.
- We read printed literature, see printed images and track public debates that appear in print.
- This print has a history which has shaped our contemporary world.

- The earliest kind of print technology was developed in countries like China, Japan and Korea. This was a system of ‘hand printing’.
- From AD 594 onwards, books were printed in China by rubbing paper against the inked surface of wood blocks.
- As China had a bureaucratic system so the textbooks for civil services examinations were printed in vast numbers.

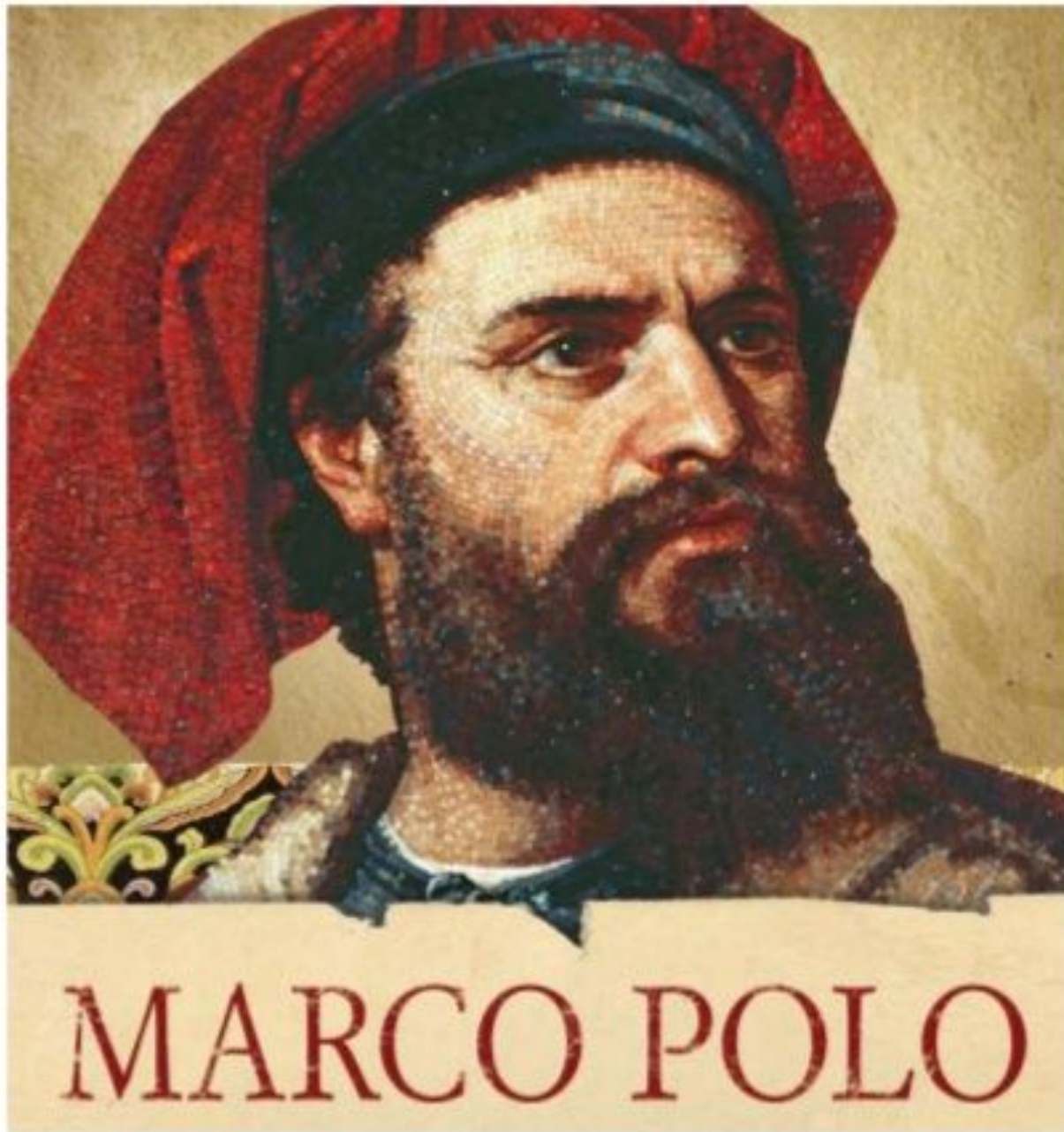
- By the seventeenth century, an urban culture boomed in China, print began to be used in everyday life.
- Reading increasingly became a leisure activity.
- Fictional narratives, poetry autobiographies, anthologies of literary masterpieces and romantic plays were read with great interests.

- The new reading culture was accompanied by a new technology.
- Western printing techniques and mechanical presses were imported in the late nineteenth century.
- Shanghai became the hub of the new print culture and from hand printing there was a gradual shift to mechanical printing.
- Hand printing technology was introduced into Japan from China by the Buddhist missionaries around 768-779 AD.

- The oldest Japanese book, printed in AD 868 is the Buddhist Diamond Sutra, contained six sheets of text and woodcut illustrations.
- In medieval Japan, poets and prose writers regularly published cheap books.
- Printing of visual material led to interesting publishing practices.

- Through the silk routes, Chinese paper reached Europe in the eleventh century.
- Paper made possible the production of manuscripts carefully written by scribes.
- In 1295, Marco Polo, a explorer returned to Italy after several years of exploration in China.
- He brought the technique of woodblock printing with him .
- Now Italians began producing books with woodblock printing and soon the technology spread to other parts of Europe.
- Luxury editions were still handwritten of expensive Vellum.



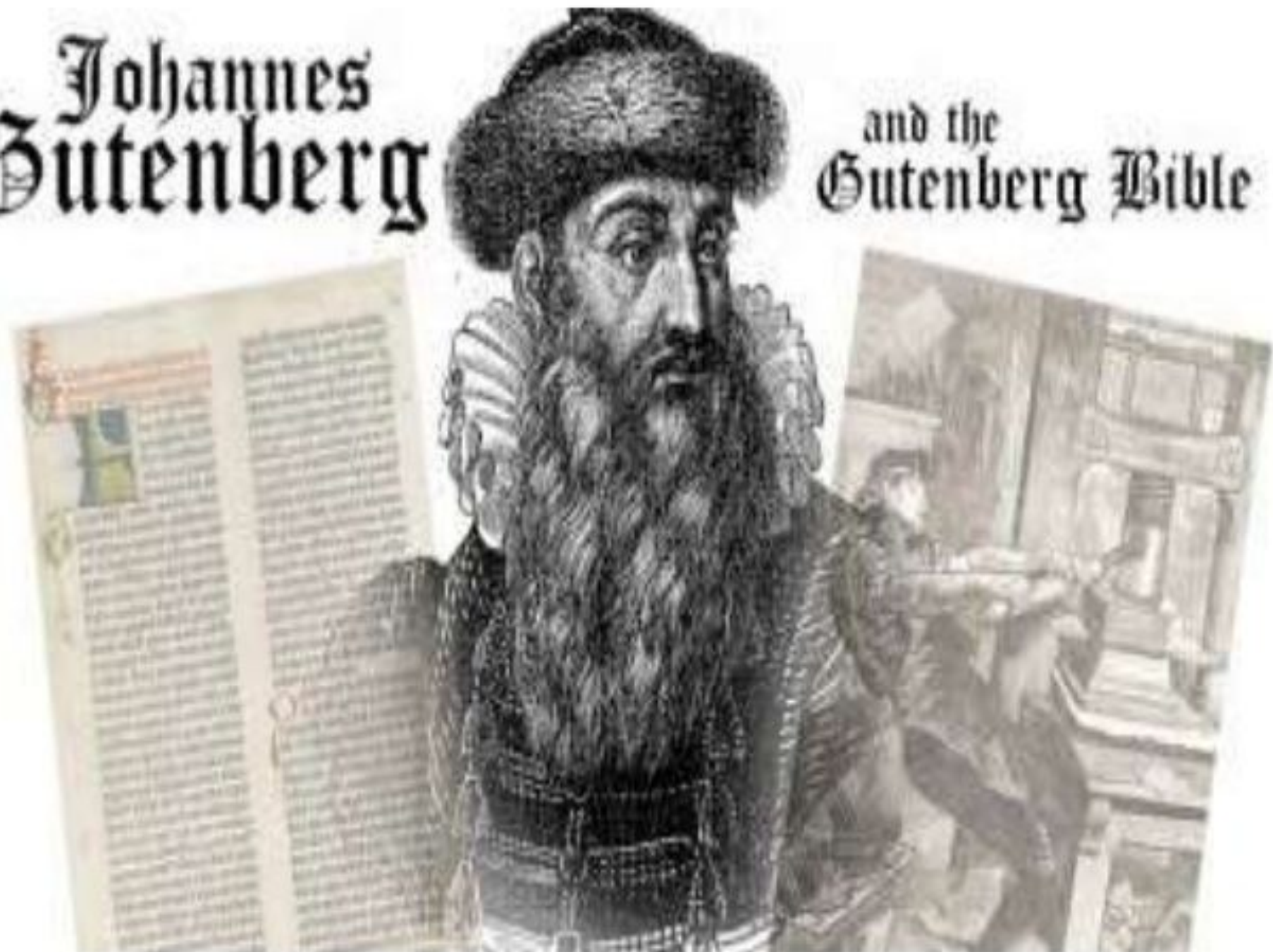


- As demand of books increased booksellers all over Europe began exporting books to many different countries.
- But the production of handwritten manuscripts could not satisfy the ever increasing demand for books.
- As a result, woodblock printing became more and more popular.
- There was a great need for even quicker and cheaper reproduction of texts. The invention of a new print technology made this possible.

- Johann Gutenberg developed the first known printing press in 1430's.
- It brought a revolution in the production of books and helped in the rapid development in science, arts and religion through books.
- The first book he printed was the Bible.
- The printing presses were set up in most of the countries Europe between 1450 and 1550.
- As a result printed books flooded the markets of Europe.

Johannes
Gutenberg

and the
Gutenberg Bible



- With the printing press a new reading public emerged. Printing reduced the cost of books.
- As a result books flooded the market reaching out to an ever-growing readership.
- Access to books created a new culture of reading. Now books could reach out to wider sections of people.

- But books could be read only by the literate and the rates of literacy in most European countries were low till the 20th century.
- Printers began publishing popular ballads and folktales.
- These were sung and recited at gatherings in villages.
- Thus, printed material began to be orally transmitted. Print also created a new debate and discussion

- But the printed book was not welcomed by all.
- There were many who were apprehensive of the effects that the access to the printed word and wider circulation of books could have on the people's mind.
- They feared that rebellious and irreligious thoughts might spread if there was no control over what was printed.

- Martin Luther, a religious reformer, criticised many of the practices and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church in Ninety Five Thesis.
- The book challenged the church to debate Luther's idea.
- Luther's writings were immediately reproduced in large numbers and read widely.
- This ultimately led to a division within the church and to the beginning of the **PROTESTANT REFORMATION.**



- In the sixteenth century, Manocchio, a miller in Italy , read a few books and reinterpreted the message of bible and created a view of God and its creation.
- It infuriated the Roman Catholic Church. Manocchio was hauled up twice and ultimately executed.
- The Roman Catholic Church, troubled by such effects of popular readings and questioning of faith, imposed severe controls over publishers and booksellers and began to maintain an Index of Prohibited Books from 1558.

- New forms of popular literature appeared in print targeting new audiences.
- Pedlars carried little books for sale in villages.
- Almanacs, rituals, calendars, ballads and folktales were sold.
- Reading matter of entertainment reached ordinary people.
- Chapmen sold chapbooks for a penny in England. Even poor could buy them.

- In France “Bibliothèque Bleue” , small books for poor were printed at low price.
- Journals, periodicals and newspapers carried information.
- Books of various sizes ,serving many different purposes and interests were brought out.
- Ideas of scientists and philosophers became accessible to common people.
- The writings of thinkers such as Thomas Paine, Voltaire and Rousseau were widely printed and read.

- By the nineteenth century, books served as the means of spreading progress and enlightenment.
- Many believed that books could change the world, liberate the society from despotism and tyranny.
- Louis Sebastian Mercier, novelist in eighteenth century France stated ‘the printing press is the most important powerful engine of progress and public opinion that will sweep despotism away.
- Several historians have argued that print culture created the conditions within which the French Revolution occurred.

- With the spread of education in Europe in the nineteenth century, children, women and workers began to read in large numbers.
- In 1857, Children's Press was established in France to fulfill the increasing demands of books among the children.
- Women became important readers as well.
- Penny magazines were especially meant for women, as were manuals teaching proper behaviour and housekeeping.
- Some popular novelists were women; Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters, George Eliot.
- They projected women in new form, a person with will, strength of personality, determination and the power to think.

- Lending libraries became instruments for educating white collar worker, artisans and lower middle class people in the 19th century.
- By the late 18th century, the press came to be made of metal. Though the 19th century there further innovations in print technology.
- By the mid nineteenth century, Richard M Hoe of New York perfected the power driven cylindrical press. It was more useful in printing newspapers. This was capable of printing 8000 sheets per hour.

- In the late 19th century offset press was developed which could print up to six colours at a time.
- From the turn of the twentieth century , electrically operated presses speeded up printing operations.

India and Print...

- India had a very rich and old tradition of handwritten manuscripts – in Sanskrit, Arabic , Persian as well as in various vernacular languages.
- Manuscripts were copied on palm leaves or on handmade paper.
- There were several problems with these manuscripts. Still they continued to be produced till the introduction of print in late nineteenth century.

- Printing press came to Goa with the Portuguese missionaries in the mid 16th century.
- Jesuit priest learnt Konkani and printed several tracts. By 1694, about 50 books had been printed in Konkani and the Kanara languages.
- Catholic priest printed Malayalam and Tamil books.
- From 1780, James Augustus Hickey began to edit the Bengal Gazette, a weekly magazine.

- Literature played a vital role in the growth of nationalism.
- National literature was produced in large quantity which made Indians aware of their rights and inspired them to fight against British imperialism. It worked miracle in arousing political consciousness among the Indians.
- From the early nineteenth century, a wider public could participate in the public discussion and express their views.

- There were debate over social and religious reforms in the nineteenth century.
- Intense debate went on over widow immolation, monotheism, Brahmanical priesthood and idolatry.
- Raja Hindu Ram Mohan Roy published the Sambad Kaumudi from 1821 and the orthodoxy commissioned the Samachar Chandrika to oppose his opinions.

- The Muslims used the cheap lithographic presses to publish Persian and Urdu translations of holy scriptures to counter the moves of the colonial power.
- The Deoband Seminary published thousands of fatwa's telling Muslim readers how to conduct themselves in their everyday life and explaining the meaning of Islamic doctrines.

- Among Hindus too , print encouraged the reading of religious texts, especially in the vernacular languages.
- The first printed edition of the Ramacharitmanas of Tulsidas, a sixteenth century text came out from Calcutta in 1810.
- From the 1880's the Naval Kishore Press at Lucknow and Sri Venkateshwar Press in Bombay published various religious texts in vernacular.

- These religious texts reached a wide circle of people. Thus print not only stimulated the publications of conflicting opinions amongst communities but also connected communities and people in different parts of India.
- More and more people could read and therefore they wanted to see their own lives experiences, emotions and relationships reflected in what they read.

- New literary forms such as novels, lyrics, short stories, essays about social and political matters entered the world of reading.
- Emphasis was laid on human lives and intimate feelings and the political and social rules that shaped such things.
- By the end of the nineteenth century, visual images could be easily reproduced in multiple copies.

New Forms of Publication ...

- Painters like Raja Ravi Verma produced images for mass circulation.
- By the 1870's caricatures and cartoons were published in journals and newspapers ridiculing the educated Indians' fascination with western tastes and clothes.
- Cheap prints and calendars, easily available in bazaars began shaping ideas about modernity and tradition, religion and politics and society and culture.

Women and Print ...

- Writers started writing about women. This led to several changes in the society.
- Women readers increased in the middle class homes.
- Liberal husbands and fathers started educating their women folk at home and sent them to schools when women schools were set up in the cities and towns after the mid-nineteenth century.
- Journals began carrying the writings by women and explained why women should be educated.

- But the conservatives were not in favour of women's education.
- In East Bengal, in the early nineteenth century, Rashsundari Debi, a young married girl in a very orthodox family learnt to read in the secrecy of her kitchen and wrote her autobiography AMAR JIBAN which was published in 1876 in the Bengali language.
- From the 1860's, a few Bengali women like Kailashbhashini Debi wrote highlighting the experiences of women – about how women were imprisoned at home, kept in ignorance, forced to do hard domestic labour and treated unjustly by the very people they served.

- In the 1880's, Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai wrote about the miserable lives of upper caste Hindu women especially widows.
- In 1926, Begum Rokeya Hussian, an educationists and literary figure, strongly condemned men for withholding education from women.
- While Urdu, Tamil, Bengali and Marathi print culture had developed early, Hindi printing began seriously only from the 1870's.
- Soon a large segment of it was devoted to the education of women.

- Issues like women's education, widowhood, widow remarriage and the national movement were discussed in the early twentieth century journals.
- In Punjab, Ram Chaddha published the fast selling Istri Dharm Vichar to teach women how to be obedient wives.
- The Khalsa Takth Society published cheap booklets about the qualities of good women.

- Pedlars took the Batala publications to homes, enabling women to read them in their leisure time,

Print and the Poor People ...

- For the poor, public libraries were set up from the early 20th century..
- From the late 19th century, issues of caste discrimination began to be written in printed tracts and essays.
- Gulamgiri of Jyotiba Phule exposed ill treatment to the low caste.
- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and E V Ramaswamy Naicker wrote powerfully against untouchability.

- **CHOTE AUR BADE KA SAVAL** of Kashibaba exposed the links between caste and class exploitation.
- Sudarshan Chakr published a collection called **Sachchi Kahaniyan**. These books highlighted the exploitation of the poor people.
- Efforts were made by social reformers to condition of improve the condition of the poor through print.

Print and Censorship ...

- In 1878, Vernacular Press Act was passed. The East India Company was dead against the freedom of the native press, it wanted to clamp it down.
- As Vernacular newspapers became strongly nationalist, the colonial government began debating measures of stringent control.
- It provided the government with rights to censor reports and editorials in the vernacular press.

- A regular check was kept on the vernacular newspaper published in different provinces.
- Despite regressive measures, nationalist newspaper grew in numbers in all parts of India.
- They reported on colonial misrule and encouraged nationalist activities which eventually rested in protests.
- When Punjab revolutionaries were deported in 1907, Bal Gangadhar Tilak wrote with great sympathy about them in Kesari.
- This led to his imprisonment in 1908 provoking in turn widespread protests all over india.

A bouquet of daisies in a clear glass vase. The flowers are in shades of light pink, peach, and white. The centers are dark brown or black. The vase is partially filled with water, and the stems are visible. The background is a soft, light pinkish-white gradient.

*Thank
you...*